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New York

Chairman: Mr. González ..... (Chile)

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda items 64, 65 and 67 to 85 (*continued*)

General debate on all disarmament and international security items

Mr. Osei (Ghana): I wish to extend to you, Sir, the best wishes of my delegation on your election as Chairman of the Committee and to assure you, and the other members of the Bureau, of our support and cooperation during our deliberations on the issues before the Committee.

Over the past few years the United Nations has frequently been called upon to take up new tasks and confront challenges as a result of the growing threat of the spread of weapons of mass destruction and of conventional arms. The United Nations response to these challenges, which has entailed upholding existing norms or facilitating the necessary political will among Member States to establish new agreements, has underscored mankind's recognition of its common heritage and survival and the importance of cooperation to achieve consensus on measures to reduce, and perhaps eliminate, such threats. Much as we all appreciate that we have a stake in nurturing the environment for sustained negotiations on nuclear disarmament and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, the lack of commitment and political will of the nuclear-weapon countries continues to impede the process of nuclear disarmament.

Ghana is committed to the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and shares in the belief in its universalization. It hopes that all nuclear-weapon States parties and nuclear-weapon-capable States parties will do their utmost to reduce the threat of these weapons and abate the gloom that they cause. There can be no security assurances without a total commitment and adherence by all countries to the articles and mechanisms of the NPT.

The third session of the Preparatory Committee for the NPT 2000 Review Conference ended on a note of extreme disappointment for some of us, as if no lessons had been learned from the first and second preparatory sessions. In this regard, I wish to reiterate a point made by my Foreign Minister to the General Assembly last month, when he warned that

> "the parties and non-parties to the NPT alike will not continue indefinitely to abide by the Treaty while the nuclear-weapon countries continue to ignore the calls of the international community to abide by their NPT commitments and pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to the cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament under strict and effective international control". (*A/54/PV.6, P.18*)

There is a need for confidence-building measures to be established between the nuclear-weapon countries and the non-nuclear-weapon countries to give a fresh impetus to the global disarmament process and ensure the maintenance of international peace and security.

It is gratifying to note that the momentum gained by the initiatives aimed at eliminating landmines was sustained

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at the First Meeting of the States parties to the Ottawa Convention, held in Maputo, Mozambique, earlier this year and by the reaffirmation in the Maputo Declaration of a commitment to the total eradication of these mines. There is no need to add that the support of the international community to ensure that the objectives of the Convention are achieved is critical.

Another area of grave concern to my delegation is the proliferation of conventional weapons, notably small arms and light weapons, which are the tools for the development of conflicts in Africa. We appreciate all the efforts to secure international cooperation and coordination in the struggle against the accumulation, proliferation and use of small arms. We also recognize the legitimate right of Member States to acquire such conventional weapons for national defensive purposes. However, their proliferation and illicit trafficking aimed at fomenting conflict must be deplored, and consideration must be given to measures that strengthen control and reduce their easy availability.

We therefore welcome the decision by the Organization of African Unity (OAU) heads of State at their summit meeting in Algeria, which, *inter alia*, urged OAU member States to adopt a coordinated approach to the problems posed by the illicit trafficking, circulation and proliferation of these arms. My delegation also calls on all States to support efforts to stem the illicit trafficking in these arms, by complying strictly with the embargo imposed by the Security Council on the sale or supply of arms and related material to non-government forces in West Africa.

As a reflection of our concern over this menace, and in recognition of the need to address it and the related issue of the forced participation of children in armed conflicts, my Government intends to host soon, with the Government of Canada, a subregional workshop aimed at building on the Mali Moratorium and establishing a framework for keeping children out of conflicts. Ghana looks forward to the support of Member States for this forthcoming event.

Mr. Rowe (Sierra Leone): On behalf of my delegation I should like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to direct the affairs of the First Committee during this session and to assure you and the other members of the Bureau of our full support.

Virtually all previous speakers in this year's general debate in the Committee have spoken — and I am sure we shall hear more in this vein — about disappointments and frustrations, lost opportunities, prolonged deadlock in negotiations and the inability of the current multilateral machinery to deliver results in arms control and disarmament. In reviewing developments during the past year, we see some positive but faint signs that some could describe as achievements. We note, for example, the entry into force of the Ottawa Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction; the possibility that some States will implement the core provision of the Chemical Weapons Convention, namely, the destruction of stockpiles and production facilities of such deadly weapons; and the recent adoption by the Disarmament Commission of guidelines on conventional arms and disarmament, with particular emphasis on the consolidation of peace. My delegation had the opportunity of making a modest contribution to the drafting of those guidelines, which are relevant to the current post-conflict situation in Sierra Leone and the process of implementing a disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme under the comprehensive Lomé Peace Agreement. Many of the provisions of the Lomé Agreement are consistent with some of the recommendations contained in the guidelines.

We must, however, register our disappointment over the lukewarm international response to the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme in Sierra Leone. In accordance with article XVI of the Lomé Agreement, the Government of Sierra Leone, immediately upon the signing of the Agreement, requested the international community to assist with the provision of the financial and technical resources needed for the adaptation and extension of the existing encampment, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme. Regrettably, three months after Lomé, disarmament and demobilization, let alone integration, have been stalled, due primarily to the lack of resources. This does not augur well for peace and security in the country and in the subregion as a whole.

The cost of disarmament is far less than the cost, in human and material resources, of the eight-year conflict. It is also far less than the cost of any fighting that could flare up as a direct result of the lack of adequate international support for the disarmament programme. The need for disarmament in Sierra Leone today is perhaps analogous to national efforts in a number of countries to deal with the problem of the indiscriminate use of handguns and the threat of the possible use of deadly chemical weapons by terrorist groups against the civilian population.

One important provision relating to disarmament in the comprehensive Lomé Peace Agreement is that a Joint Monitoring Commission should receive information from

the parties regarding the strength and locations of all combatants, as well as the positions and descriptions of all known unexploded bombs, explosive ordnance devices, minefields, booby traps, wire entanglements and all other physical or military hazards. The Agreement went beyond that and authorized the Joint Monitoring Commission to seek all necessary technical assistance in mine clearance and the disposal or destruction of similar devices and weapons under the operational control of the peacekeeping force. In this regard, and in addition to the substantive disarmament and demobilization activities, we believe that Sierra Leone could benefit from the [United Nations Trust Fund for the Consolidation of Peace through Practical Disarmament Measures]. We need all the assistance we can muster in support of such activities as the storage and destruction of collected arms and ammunition under the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme.

We realize that the established priorities in disarmament are still nuclear weapons, other weapons of mass destruction, and conventional weapons, in that order. However, we believe, based on our bitter experience in Sierra Leone during the past eight years, that conventional arms, especially the proliferation and illicit transfer of small arms, light weapons and ammunition, can be devastating for any country, both in Africa and elsewhere. At the same time, conventional weapons continue to pose perhaps as much threat to national stability and international peace and security as nuclear weapons. That is why we continue to attach importance to the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) moratorium on the importation, exportation and manufacture of small arms and light weapons in West Africa.

We would like to take this opportunity to appeal to members of the Wassenaar Arrangement on Export Controls for Conventional Arms and Dual-Use Goods and Technologies to be steadfast in their approach to the implementation of the ECOWAS moratorium. The need to promote respect for the moratorium by other arms-producing countries cannot be overemphasized.

We wish to acknowledge with appreciation the establishment in Sierra Leone of a project by the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) in support of the moratorium. My delegation looks forward to the extension of the moratorium beyond the West African subregion, and the conclusion, at the earliest possible time, of an appropriate African convention against the illicit manufacturing, importation and exportation of firearms, ammunition, explosives and similar harmful devices.

We welcome the latest observations contained in the Secretary-General's report (A/54/258) on the work of the Group of Governmental Experts on Small Arms and his report on the feasibility of undertaking a study on restricting the manufacture of and trade in small arms to manufacturers authorized by States. We also support current efforts to convene an international conference on small arms by 2001.

When we consider the social, humanitarian, economic and political consequences of the excessive accumulation and use of armaments, and the number of armed conflicts in the world today within and between States, we see that developments in arms control and disarmament are neither significant nor commendable. In fact, these so-called achievements should be merely noted. We should have the courage to re-emphasize the increasing challenge which the threat of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction, the excessive accumulation of conventional weapons, and illegal arms transfers poses to humanity.

You, Mr. Chairman, and Under-Secretary-General Dhanapala have given us from your vantage point an objective and realistic assessment of the current situation and a platform on which we can base our deliberations in the Committee during the next several weeks. As the Under-Secretary-General rightly points out,

> "together we must refuse to accept that war"

— and with his permission I wish to add "and the threat of war" —

> "weapons of mass destruction or the excessive accumulation or illicit transfer"

— again let me add with his permission "and use" —

> "of arms are now just landmarks of the natural human condition". (*A/C.1/54/PV.3*)

Let us face it. When we consider the magnitude of man's inhumanity to man in the form of mass killings and genocide; when we continue to witness the deliberate and indiscriminate destruction of economic and social infrastructures and the extent of the grossly immoral act of diverting resources from the illegal trade in diamonds and other precious minerals to fuel rebel wars and other destabilizing activities; when we consider the excessive accumulation of armaments; and when we count the number of children who through armed conflict we have deprived of their future, we should bow our heads in

shame. We should also admit that the twentieth century will go down as the most cruel and insecure century in human history.

It is not enough for us merely to review what we may have achieved in arms control and disarmament, and applaud ourselves for it. It is not enough to pat ourselves on the back for the few slow and faltering steps we may have taken towards the goal of the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. At this point we should instead be honest and ask ourselves whether in this century we have really saved "succeeding generations from the scourge of war". Granted, nuclear weapons have not been used in the past half-century, but the threat they pose to the security of all States, nuclear and non-nuclear alike, and the enormous expense involved in the development and stockpiling of these weapons are unconscionable.

The Secretary-General has observed that global negotiations on nuclear disarmament remain at a standstill and that the persistence of divergent views on the most pressing issues on the international disarmament agenda has affected the work of the Conference on Disarmament again this year. In the light of these developments, my delegation believes that it is time to devise something — call it a new momentum, a new strategy, a new perspective, or even a new agenda — to make the nuclear disarmament process at least more credible, something that will give the peoples of the world not just an assurance but a guarantee that the pace of nuclear disarmament will be accelerated and that nuclear weapons will never be used against nuclear or non-nuclear States.

These are not unrealistic objectives. In the view of my delegation, we can begin by giving careful and serious consideration to the initiative entitled "Towards a nuclear-weapon-free world: the need for a new agenda". That approach is even more relevant in the absence of a consensus on the convening of a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, and as we prepare for the Millennium Summit devoted to peace, security and disarmament.

The Chairman (*spoke in Spanish*): I now call on the observer of the Holy See.

Archbishop Martino (Holy See) (*spoke in Spanish*): I should like to begin by joining in the congratulations to you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of the Committee. I also wish to congratulate the other members of the Bureau. I am sure that under your leadership the Committee's work during this final session of the century and the millennium will have a happy and useful outcome.

(*spoke in English*)

At this last session of the Committee in this century our eyes naturally look to the horizon to scan what is ahead in the twenty-first century. But before doing so we must reflect on the century about to close in order to learn from experience. With profound sorrow we must record, as already indicated by the representative of Sierra Leone, that war deaths in the twentieth century were much greater in number than all those in previous centuries from the first century A.D. More than 110 million people have been killed in the wars of this century. Nor has the killing diminished in the last decade of the century, the so-called post-cold-war period. East Timor, Kosovo, Serbia, Iraq, Bosnia, Northern Ireland, Haiti, the Congo, Rwanda, Burundi, Somalia, Mozambique, Afghanistan, Cambodia and Sri Lanka are just some of the affected areas in nearly all the regions of the world whose hopes for growth and prosperity have been stifled by chronic conflicts.

Despite the undoubted advance of civilization as a whole, acts of barbarism in our time have sunk to new depths of depravity. Exterminations, genocide, mass killings, deportation and tortures in the extreme have scarred the memory of this century. Distinctions between military combatants and civilians have disappeared; human rights violations against women and children occur in unprecedented numbers. In the past decade 2 million children have been killed in armed conflicts, between 4 million and 5 million more have been disabled and more than 12 million have been made homeless. Terror and violence, now so common, speak of deliberate victimization.

Such brutality must be stopped by international legal authority. The carnage occurring within States, as well as conflicts between States, must be addressed by a competent legal authority operating under the mandate of the United Nations Security Council. We will not be able to build a path to peace in the twenty-first century unless there is universal recognition and acceptance that the Security Council is the pre-eminent authority in enforcing peace and security.

We are daily witnesses to cruel wars and massacres that go far beyond all humanitarian norms and in which civilians are often both victims and protagonists. Such conflicts are fed by the availability of small arms and light

weapons. The Holy See has repeatedly urged that effective measures be taken to stem the trade in these arms and continues to support that. However important international or regional measures may be, they will not be effective unless States establish national controls on the sale and transfer of such weapons.

Still further measures must be taken to stem the illicit sale and transfer of small arms and light weapons. They continue to find their way into the hands of irregular forces, guerrillas and terrorists, and also play a nefarious role in drug cartels and organized crime syndicates. In this regard, it is encouraging to note the growing attention being given to the control of the sale of ammunition for these weapons. It is also important to continue to reinforce practical disarmament measures by which arms used in internal conflicts are collected and destroyed with the agreement of all concerned. That is a peace-building measure and also ensures that the same arms will not be used to kill still more innocent victims.

The First Meeting of the States parties to the Convention on the total elimination of landmines bore witness to what the determined will of States can achieve in the field of small arms. Every effort must be made to make it universal and to implement fully its provisions. Anti-personnel landmines must be totally eliminated in the name of humanity. The peaceful development of many societies will be hindered until the mine-clearance process is completed. Adequate funding must be assured for both the removal of landmines and their destruction.

While militarism of all kinds must be checked, the abolition of nuclear weapons is the prerequisite for peace in the twenty-first century. What has been promised for a long time by the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) must be achieved. Despite all the difficulties of achieving full compliance with the NPT, the Holy See never wavers from what its delegation has said previously in this Committee:

> "Nuclear weapons are incompatible with the peace we seek for the twenty-first century. They cannot be justified. They deserve condemnation. The preservation of the Non-Proliferation Treaty demands an unequivocal commitment to their abolition... This is a moral challenge, a legal challenge and a political challenge. That multiple-based challenge must be met by the application of our humanity." (*A/C.1/52/PV.5, p.15*)

The Holy See favours a new set of principles and objectives for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament to be adopted at the 2000 NPT Review Conference. The new principles and objectives, building on the 1995 work, should reinforce the political accountability that is critical to the vitality and viability of the NPT process.

It should be an immediate objective of the international community to eliminate non-strategic nuclear weapons, de-alert strategic weapons by removing warheads from delivery vehicles, establish a legally binding, negative security assurances regime, and secure from the nuclear-weapon States a pledge not to be the first to use nuclear weapons. At the same time, the Conference on Disarmament should help the NPT process by commencing substantive discussions on all nuclear disarmament issues. That could encourage and expand the START process, which all the nuclear-weapon States should join.

Various new initiatives, such as the coalition for a new agenda, are opening the way to progress in some of the more pressing areas of nuclear disarmament. In view of the 2000 NPT Review Conference, nuclear-weapon States will, moreover, be called upon to give proof of their determination to move towards the elimination of nuclear weapons. Without progress in this field it will be difficult to advance in the implementation of all the provisions of the Treaty and to achieve its much needed universality.

Chemical and biological weapons stand alongside nuclear arms as a threat to all humanity. As a State party to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), the Holy See will continue to urge all States to ratify the Convention without delay. Its stringent verification procedures guarantee its full observance and yet protect national interests in other fields of chemical production. The Holy See would welcome similar measures for the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), and urges that the negotiation of a verification protocol to the Treaty be given all the attention it merits at present. The conscience of humanity must make it strikingly clear that all weapons of mass destruction violate the very principles of peaceful coexistence, collaboration and solidarity among nations and peoples.

This Committee has done valuable work through the years. Now, on the threshold of not just a new century but a new millennium, let us pause to put our work in focus. It is not just the details of resolutions that should command our attention; rather, it is the sweep of history. History is calling us forward to use the blossoming of our intelligence and new-found technological prowess to prevent war. Diplomatic initiatives, civil society support, and most of all

political will are required to nourish the international community's desire for peace.

We are blessed that new techniques of early warning of conflict are available, along with the tools of preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and peace-building. Powerful new tools to prevent war include confidence-building measures, transparency and information exchange, mutual constraints on force deployments, negotiated reductions in armed forces, and restrictions on the arms trade. All these approaches to peace need to be combined into a unified programme to prevent war. A comprehensive approach reflecting new ways of thinking, new understandings, and new solutions to security, will strengthen existing peacemaking and disarmament programmes.

It may indeed take a long time to build a permanent global security system, but if it is taken in phases people will take heart that movement to fulfil a vision is occurring. Sequenced steps making war rare along the way will save thousands of lives and huge sums of money. The length of time to achieve the goal of a world without war should not deter us from starting now. Without such a programme, the killing will continue.

We must begin the new millennium with the firm conviction that war is not inevitable. War and mass violence usually result from deliberate political decisions. Rather than there being intervention in violent conflicts after they have erupted and then engaging in post-conflict peace-building, it is more humane and more efficient to prevent such violence in the first place. That is the essence of a culture-of-peace approach.

Overcoming our sadness over the past, we must take hope for the future. As the third millennium dawns, we must rededicate ourselves to sharing in God's continued development of the planet. We have the ability to build peace in the new millennium. That is our great strength. Let us join to create the political will to establish such a culture of peace.

Mr. Amouzou (Togo) (*spoke in French*): Like the delegations that have already spoken, the delegation of Togo wishes, through me, to warmly congratulate you, Sir, upon your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee at the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly. The choice is not random; it is the natural continuation of a career devoted to the promotion of international peace and security and a recognition of your skills and competence. My delegation assures you of its cooperation and expresses its conviction that our work will be successful.

My congratulations also go to the Secretary-General, who has spared no effort to maintain and promote international peace and security.

The present session, which closes the twentieth century, is an opportunity for States to ask themselves questions about the political will and readiness to promote the conditions needed to allow the United Nations to achieve its disarmament, peace and security objectives. That is so because the issue of disarmament and international security is still at the heart of the priorities of the international community, despite the efforts to achieve general and complete disarmament under effective international control.

The picture of the world as the century fades scarcely gives reason for optimism about peace. More than in previous years, the last two years of the century have witnessed numerous developments that threaten the implementation of existing international disarmament agreements. Whether in regard to nuclear weapons, other weapons of mass destruction or small arms and light weapons, the present world situation is very alarming, and it seems that the advent of a world of peace is not exactly in the offing.

That is why my delegation echoes the concerns expressed here by many representatives, given the setbacks in international action for nuclear disarmament and for an end to the arms race. We appeal to the international community, and particularly the countries directly concerned, to pursue efforts to put a definitive end to the proliferation of nuclear weapons and the threat that it poses.

The phenomenon of small arms and light weapons and the illicit traffic in them is of great concern to my country, and I should therefore like to devote the rest of my remarks to the issue.

As we note from the conclusions drawn by the Panel of experts established by the Secretary-General in 1996, there are three main reasons for the accumulation and transfer of small arms and light weapons. First, States — suppliers and receivers — refuse to limit the production, delivery and acquisition of these weapons to the quantities necessary to ensure their self-defence, national and collective, and their domestic security. Secondly, States — suppliers and receivers — are not able to exercise effective

control, allowing them to prevent the acquisition, delivery, transit or circulation of these weapons. Thirdly, small arms and light weapons are used in armed conflicts or in criminal activities, such as arms trafficking or drug trafficking, or other activities contrary to domestic and international law.

As we can see, the phenomenon is exacerbated by the lack of internationally recognized standards aimed at limiting the accumulation and transfer of these weapons.

For the African States especially, which unfortunately are confronted by wars and crises of all types, the issue of the circulation of small arms and light weapons is at the core of our priorities, as the Secretary-General noted in his report (A/52/871) on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa, and his related progress report (S/1999/1008). Togo therefore participates actively in all regional initiatives to curb this scourge, *inter alia* through the moratorium on the importation, exportation and manufacture of small arms and light weapons in West Africa, signed in Abuja, Nigeria on 31 October 1998, and the programme for coordination and assistance for the development of security and development that derives from it.

At the national level the Government of Togo has set up a national committee to combat the proliferation and illicit holding of small arms. However, concerted international action seems the only way to achieve a lasting solution to the problem. In that connection, my country welcomes the United Nations initiatives to restrain and thwart this phenomenon, and very much hopes that the international conference decided upon by the General Assembly in resolution 53/77 E of 6 December 1998, and scheduled to be held in Geneva in 2001, will make it possible to find effective solutions.

Here it is appropriate for my delegation to emphasize significance of the role of institutions such as the United Nations regional centres for peace and disarmament, in Asia, Latin America and Africa. With respect in particular to the Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa, which has its headquarters in my country, the Secretary-General in his report (A/54/332) on the Centre rightly noted the important role it has played in the elaboration of regional confidence-building measures to strengthen socio-political stability and security in the African States.

The views of the Secretary-General are consistent with the decision adopted by the Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) at their thirty-fifth summit meeting in Algiers in July, a decision which reaffirmed the need to establish close cooperation between the Regional Centre and the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, and with subregional organizations working in the areas of peace, security and development.

Since it got straight down to revitalizing itself after the appointment of a Director, the Regional Centre has engaged in a number of activities, including the workshop on the illicit trafficking in small arms, held in Lomé from 2 to 4 August 1999. That workshop gave representatives from more than 25 African countries an opportunity to identify practical ways to stem the flow of small arms in Africa and propose strategies to collect and destroy them. That initiative should certainly be renewed if financial resources allow.

As we have noted, the United Nations regional centres in Africa, Asia and Latin America have a prime role to play in the present context as regards maintaining and promoting peace at the subregional level. Regrettably, however, their financial situation is critical. It is therefore desirable that the international community should decide to provide adequate logistical and financial support so that they can properly fulfil their mission.

My country, which remains firmly attached to the concept of micro-disarmament, wishes to take this opportunity to draw the attention of the international community once more to the disastrous consequences of small arms, particularly in developing countries, where they foment conflict. There is no doubt that solving this question will make it possible to guarantee peoples throughout the world a secure environment, one that is propitious for sustainable development.

Mr. Babaa (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*spoke in Arabic*): I wish at the outset to convey to you, Sir, our congratulations on your assumption of the chairmanship of this significant Committee. I also wish to congratulate the other members of the Bureau on their election. I am confident that thanks to your wide experience and valuable guidance our deliberations will be successful and our work in the First Committee will produce positive results in the interests of international peace and security.

The United Nations was established 54 years ago as an Organization intended to rid humanity of destruction and the scourges of war in order to build a new world based on peace, justice and international law. From its inception, and

by its resolution 41 (I), the General Assembly confirmed the central role of disarmament in achieving peace and security. However, what we are witnessing today runs counter to the desire of the founding fathers of the international Organization.

The end of this century is witnessing an escalation of the arms race and the breaking out of age-old, bloody conflicts, whether religious, racial, nationalistic or tribal. Instead of our achieving world peace, prosperity and development, these unprecedented conflicts appeared on the international scene as a result of ferocious rivalry for influence and hegemony, and the new role of the arms mafia and the huge multinational corporations, with their intertwined economic interests, whose only aim is the sowing of the seeds of instability, the waging of wars and the nurturing of their interests to meet their insatiable desire for raw materials in return for the production of lethal weapons. Mr. Dhanapala, the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament, described this phenomenon as the globalization of the military industries. It makes it difficult for Governments to control the flow of weapons when the special interests of the companies producing arms run counter to the commitments of Member States to peace and security.

The arms race is escalating at both the regional and international levels. Military expenditures are doubling, according to recent statistics. Arms sales last year reached more than $21 billion, and developing countries have spent about 70 per cent of that amount in the last decade. This was at the expense of development and led to the eruption and perpetuation of civil wars and the obstruction of sustainable development.

The hegemony of the big Powers accounts for 80 per cent of arms sales. Some of these big Powers possessing great arsenals of nuclear and conventional weapons are doubling their military budgets for hegemony, for interfering and terrorizing weak peoples, instead of reducing their stockpiles and giving effective safeguards to the non-nuclear States against various threats. At the same time, they persist in producing weapons and selling them to small countries, a factor that led to the start of the arms race and the worsening of economic and social problems, because some of those States set aside a large part of their resources for defence expenditures instead of using them for development and the prosperity of their peoples.

One super-Power calls on other States to accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and to cease nuclear tests, but that State has not ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), and it overlooks the testing and possession by another State of such lethal weapons. In the meantime, it prevents other States from possessing such weapons, even conventional weapons that they need for self-defence against external dangers and challenges. If we work for a better and safer world based on peace and justice, we must avoid being selective in the field of arms, their development, possession and production.

One matter of great concern is the fact that the end of the cold war has not reduced or ended the risk of a sudden nuclear war, which still hangs over the world, especially since there are between 30,000 and 40,000 nuclear bombs, one-sixth of which are installed in rockets ready for launching in seconds. Despite conventions and agreements between nuclear States to avoid such risks, the events that took place a few months ago during the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) raids against Kosovo and Serbia prove the possibility, at least theoretically, that such horrific events could take place.

The risks associated with nuclear weapons are even greater, because of the arms race in outer space. Thirteen years have elapsed since the horrific Chernobyl incident, which generated fear throughout the world. The repetition of such an event, the most recent of which took place in the Far East, is a matter of great concern, because of the terrors of radiation for man and animal and plant life, in spite of all safety measures. The use of nuclear weapons does not allow for any error in operation or in design. Furthermore, the problem of nuclear waste, which has not yet been radically solved by scientists, is a matter causing great unease, because dumping it in the seas, oceans or deserts poses future risks not only for the environment, but also for all human beings.

We look forward to the convening of the 2000 NPT Review Conference and success in achieving its goals. However, we wish to confirm that finding permanent, just and peaceful solutions to international problems is the only way to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons. The best solution is nuclear disarmament and the elimination of nuclear weapons within a time-frame that ensures humanity's survival.

We strongly support the efforts of the international community to establish more nuclear-weapon-free zones in the world as an important step to promote the implementation of the NPT and nuclear disarmament. It is also an effective way to promote international peace and security. Therefore, my country signed the African

Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty, the Pelindaba Treaty. Other treaties in this respect have made the southern hemisphere free of nuclear weapons. That is a significant contribution towards the desired goal — the creation of a world free of nuclear weapons. In this respect, the international community has to make further efforts in order to turn the Arab and South Asia regions into nuclear-weapon-free zones.

The Arab region is threatened by the nuclear weapons possessed by Tel Aviv. Recent reports confirm that Tel Aviv occupies sixth place in the nuclear world, since it possesses between 300 kilograms and 500 kilograms of plutonium for use for military purposes, an amount that can produce more than 250 nuclear weapons. The Middle East is suffering today from an obvious and serious disequilibrium because of the accession of all Arab States to the NPT and their commitment to the Treaty. In the meantime, Tel Aviv has neither acceded to nor signed the Treaty. It has also rejected International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards over its nuclear reactors and installations, and it has for a quarter of a century rejected the calls of the international community to turn the area into a nuclear-weapon-free zone. It still dumps nuclear waste in the occupied Arab territories and continues its programme of developing all kinds of weapons of mass destruction, biological or chemical, because of the world's inaction and the double standards that the great Powers apply. The best evidence of that is the well-known incident of the El-Al aircraft in Amsterdam.

The lethal weapons possessed by Tel Aviv constitute a permanent threat hanging over the peoples of the region as well as over the peoples of adjacent areas. Unless these lethal weapons are destroyed soon, the efforts of the international community aimed at non-proliferation will be a dismal failure.

We oppose the illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons, and call for the elimination of stockpiles of them, because they lead to an escalation of conflicts and pose a threat to peace and security. We call for further international cooperation and coordination to control that, especially in areas of conflict. We also welcome an international conference to discuss the various aspects of this issue and to take effective regional and international measures in this respect.

In addition to the interest of the international community in the problems of small arms and light weapons and the risks associated with them and the regional conflicts and wars they nurture throughout the world, the problem of landmines, their dangers and horrific results has been accorded the priority it deserves by the international community. The conclusion of the Ottawa Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, and its entry into force, is but a small step in the right direction.

However, that Treaty overlooked other mines as well as a decision on the legal responsibility of the colonial States and warring countries that had planted the mines in the territories of other States. The General Assembly and regional and international organizations confirmed the principle of the responsibility of these States and the principal role they must assume, including the payment of compensation to the victims and assistance in developing comprehensive programmes in this area. But all that has remained a dead letter.

My country has suffered from the problem of mines planted by the warring States on our territory during the Second World War, because Libyan territory was the scene of ferocious battles between the Allies and the Axis forces. Millions of mines were planted, which led to our territory's being turned into killing grounds where hundreds of Libyans were killed and thousands were maimed. Therefore, the development process in these areas came to a halt. Land reclamation, exploration of natural resources, drilling for oil and combating desertification also came to a halt, because the Libyan authorities lack maps and other information on the location of these mines. Recently an agreement was reached between Libya and Italy in which Italy pledged to assist in the clearance of these mines and also to assist in building a medical centre for artificial limbs and providing a social fund to help the disabled and other victims. We hope that other warring countries will follow suit and help Libya to eliminate this problem, which arose as a result of their military activities there. We also hope that they will contribute to United Nations funds to help countries suffering from this problem.

Libya, which is situated on the south coast of the Mediterranean, has one of the longest coasts on the Mediterranean. Therefore, it believes in the importance of turning the sea into an area of peace, security and cooperation for all the littoral States and away from the threat of weapons of mass destruction, tensions, military bases and foreign fleets, so that the people of the area can enjoy tranquillity, stability, prosperity and peace with justice, because without justice peace cannot be achieved.

In conclusion, my delegation wishes to pay tribute to the efforts of the United Nations in the field of disarmament, under the leadership of Under-Secretary-General Jayantha Dhanapala. We hope that he and his colleagues will have further success in their mission. We confirm our full cooperation with him in the various activities aimed at the achievement of our desired goals. We cannot fail to pay tribute also to the efforts of non-governmental organizations in this respect, especially their efforts to alert international public opinion to the risks of nuclear weapons. We also wish to register the fact that some of them are not objective and apply double standards with regard to the production of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East.

Mr. Bivero (Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): The delegation of Venezuela congratulates you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee at the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly. We are pleased to see a representative of a Latin American country taking up such an important responsibility at this time. We are convinced that your personal experience and professional skills guarantee that the Committee will successfully carry out the delicate and complex tasks entrusted to it. I should also like to express our gratitude to Ambassador André Mernier, who ably chaired the First Committee last year. We also congratulate the other members of the Bureau and thank the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Ambassador Jayantha Dhanapala, for his statement at the beginning of the general debate.

The work of the First Committee takes place at an unfavourable international juncture, where uncertainty and the unpredictable nature of events seem to prevail. The first years of this decade were marked by the achievement of important disarmament and arms control agreements. Today we observe with great concern that this trend has been reversed. The disarmament process seems to be experiencing a crisis resulting from inertia and a lack of dynamism in the continuation of efforts in this sphere.

Venezuela regrets in particular that for the third consecutive year the Conference on Disarmament, the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum, was unable to reach agreement regarding a programme of work. This deadlock, which we witnessed when we chaired the Conference on Disarmament in February, is a matter of particular concern to us.

Nevertheless, we are convinced that only through cooperation, dialogue, and respect for the norms and principles of international law shall we be able to find consensus formulas that will allow us to revitalize multilateral diplomacy with an integrated approach in the different actions that should be carried out at the bilateral, plurilateral and multilateral levels. The initiative of the countries promoting a new agenda for nuclear disarmament is of great importance, and we fully support it.

Venezuela considers that the elimination of nuclear weapons continues to be a must. We regard the establishment of an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament at the Conference on Disarmament as a priority objective. The proposed establishment of an ad hoc committee with a mandate limited to the exchange of information would in no way contribute to strengthening the Conference on Disarmament. On the contrary, it would tend to diminish the *raison d'être* and special nature of this negotiating forum.

From this perspective, our delegation wishes to express its concern that the START II Treaty has not yet entered into force. We call on the parties to increase their efforts to comply with this objective and start talks on the START III agreement as soon as possible. Clearly, such actions would help to strengthen the network of international nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation norms and principles.

In the context of non-proliferation, Venezuela shares the concern that the international community should unite in efforts to negotiate an international agreement on the prohibition of fissile material. Last year's decision by the Conference on Disarmament to establish an ad hoc committee on this matter represents an important element in the strategy for strengthening non-proliferation. We believe that the Conference on Disarmament should re-establish that committee next year, and its members should work together expeditiously in order to attain an objective which at the same time might have a positive effect on the cause of nuclear disarmament.

Venezuela considers that the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones in different areas of the planet represents, in the framework of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, a positive measure that will contribute to strengthening international peace and stability. We support the initiatives to establish such zones on the basis of freely negotiated agreements between the States of the region concerned. We are encouraged by the Disarmament Commission's adopting this year a set of guidelines on the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones. In this respect, we welcome the efforts made by the countries of Central

Asia. We hope that in the very near future similar initiatives will take place in other regions of the world.

In April this year Venezuela deposited with the Secretary-General the instrument ratifying the Convention on the prohibition of anti-personnel mines, thus completing the formalities for this juridical instrument to enter into force on 1 October this year. In an attempt to reconcile legitimate security concerns and humanitarian needs, Venezuela reiterates its adherence to the cause of disarmament and international humanitarian law. My country's participation in demining activities in Central America shows the commitment of the Venezuelan Government to the elimination of these weapons, which cause so much suffering to the civil population.

Even though the elimination of nuclear weapons continues to be a prime objective, the worsening of internal conflicts in various regions has caused the international community concern, because of the impact of the illicit trafficking in, and uncontrolled proliferation of, small arms on those conflict situations. As the Secretary-General told the First Committee last year, the need for strategies to deal with the situation has led to the inclusion of the problem of the illicit trafficking in arms in the list of priorities on the multilateral disarmament agenda.

Venezuela supports the convening of an international conference on the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons no later than 2001. We hope that it will make possible the adoption of cooperative measures to face up to this problem, whose links with illicit transnational activities such as terrorism, drug trafficking and organized crime cannot be underestimated, because of their consequences for the stability of States.

Significant agreements have been reached at the regional level, agreements such as the Inter-American Convention against the illicit trafficking in firearms, explosives and other related materials, and the initiatives of some African States and the European Union. We hope that at the conference States will reach agreement on the responsibility of producing countries, receiving countries and transit countries. Venezuela recognizes the important work of the Group of experts on small arms in formulating recommendations.

Turning to another matter, Venezuela supports Peru's initiative regarding strengthening the Regional Centre for Peace, located in Lima. We believe that the Centre should receive the necessary resources to be able to work effectively.

The complexity of the international peace and security challenges facing the international community on the threshold of the new century is shown by the inability of the Preparatory Committee for the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) 2000 Review Conference to formulate substantive recommendations for the Conference, the deadlock in the Conference on Disarmament and the difficulties over the prompt entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). What is needed to overcome the impasse is a cooperative approach. In this context, the role of the United Nations, with its disarmament mechanisms, has become more relevant, given the Organization's unquestionable authority and legitimacy.

We are sure that under your leadership, Mr. Chairman, the First Committee will decidedly be able to carry out its tasks and achieve the consensus needed in order to make progress. We are also sure that we can advance in the right direction, given a constructive spirit and flexibility.

Ms. Molaroni (San Marino) (*spoke in Spanish*): I should like first to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship. We know your ability and are confident that we shall be successful in our work this year.

(*spoke in English*)

I should also like to thank the outgoing Chairman for the excellent work he accomplished during a very difficult year in the First Committee.

I will briefly present the position of my country on some of the issues the Committee will consider this year.

The time has come when we can no longer tolerate States complaining about the high costs of converting arms industries. We have seen too much money spent on purchasing new armaments. It has been proved and calculated that the funds consecrated to military budgets could solve many problems if used for social and economic development. The world total annual sales of major conventional weapons continues to be more than $20 billion. African military expenditures are a staggering $760 billion. In 1998 the five Powers that are permanent members of the Security Council dominated the global arms market. They accounted for 83 per cent of the world's exports of major conventional arms. I am very poor at mathematics, but it seems to me that those activities entail a considerable capital flow.

On the other hand, official development assistance has fallen to its lowest level in half a century. The relationship between development and disarmament is crystal clear. We have been talking for too long, and it is time to act.

The world's stock of small arms amounts to 500 million, and it is growing steadily, as some 70 countries continue to manufacture such weapons on an industrial scale. Between 1945 and 1990 alone, 100 million assault rifles were manufactured. The situation is clearly alarming.

In the broad context of small arms, the General Assembly decided, in its resolution 53/77 E, to convene an international conference on the illicit arms trade in all its aspects no later than 2001, to develop and strengthen international efforts to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects. We support that resolution, in the hope that the conference will help to tackle the issues of assistance to national and local measures for the collection, control, disposal and/or destruction of arms, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants, and assistance for public education and awareness programmes.

San Marino has for quite a long time been making its contribution, understandably on a small scale, to projects to improve social awareness of arms and landmines in various areas of the globe affected by the problem of small arms, and it feels particularly concerned about the matter. In this context, we were among the first countries to ratify the Ottawa Convention and were very satisfied that it entered into force last March. We sincerely hope that the process of demining will soon receive the funds and attention it urgently deserves.

San Marino believes, as has been stated on many occasions, including recently in the open session of the Security Council on the report of the Secretary-General on Africa, that the problem of the illicit arms trade has acquired alarming dimensions and has to be one of the priorities of the United Nations. San Marino was one of the few countries that responded to the first request made by the Secretary-General pursuant to resolution 52/38 J, which calls for all countries to provide transparent information to the Secretary-General in order to contribute to establishing the situation in different areas of the globe and allow the United Nations to create programmes aimed at solving the different situations.

We know that some countries have inadequate systems that fail to control stocks and the transfer of arms, and that the lack of information exchange and cooperation at the national, regional and international levels is still very high. We have to overcome these barriers, and we trust that the United Nations can do better than countries alone.

For this reason also, San Marino is very interested in, and supports, the work of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR), focusing on supporting peace initiatives; arms limitation and disarmament; and information, research and publications in Africa, the Middle East, Latin America, North-East Asia, South Asia and Central Asia. We regret the fact that the Centres for regional disarmament remained without a director for a long time, but we are happy that the Secretary-General recently appointed new directors. The newly elected directors have been trying to gather funds to promote projects in their respective areas of action, but they are constantly threatened by the lack of adequate resources. We appeal to all countries to support the Centres' activities. We must remember that the regional level is extremely important. Smaller areas are easier to manage, monitor and organize.

We consider the creation of an African arms database last June to be a very good initiative, but we would also like to see other arms databases functioning around the globe and being regularly updated thanks to the cooperation of all countries.

In resolution 53/82 of 4 December 1998 the Assembly called upon all States of the Mediterranean region to adhere to all the multilaterally negotiated legal instruments related to the field of disarmament and non-proliferation. That would favour the conditions for confidence-building measures among countries, promoting transparency on military matters, reporting military expenditures and providing accurate data and information to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms: strengthen cooperation in combating terrorism, illicit drug production, consumption and trafficking; and improve the political, economic and social situation.

San Marino is very pleased that the European Union, together with other European organizations, is determined to promote security and cooperation in the Mediterranean region. We are very satisfied with the way in which matters have been proceeding. The ad hoc meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs, held in Palermo in June 1998, and the third Euro-Mediterranean ministerial conference, held in Stuttgart in April 1999, show that the partnership has developed and strengthened, and that it is possible not only in the field of security, but also at the level of economic and social development and cooperation and at the level of

development of the rule of law, to create a greater understanding among cultures.

It is an honour and a pleasure for me to announce in this forum that San Marino has started in its Parliament the process that will soon result in our ratifying the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). We invite other countries to join us.

Our Republic is deeply committed to achieving total nuclear disarmament. Every time a nuclear weapon has been used we have all seen the appalling and destructive results. The first resolution — resolution 1 (I) —

> "for the elimination from national armaments of atomic weapons and of all other major weapons adaptable to mass destruction"

was adopted by the General Assembly in 1946. By now we should all have understood that there is no winner after a nuclear explosion, no stronger Power, nothing to celebrate. It is curious how, at the end of a millennium during which we, unfortunately, experimented in many ways with such devastation, we are still debating whether we should or should not eliminate nuclear arsenals, or, even better, whether we should keep some to actually maintain world security. Maybe it is because San Marino has never had any nuclear ambition that it is really hard for us to understand the position of some of our fellow Member States. We are aware that the costs of disarmament are prohibitive, but we are also aware that large amounts spent to acquire or maintain armaments could instead be used to eliminate them.

I do not deny that everybody should play a role in nuclear disarmament. Nuclear States, or States with nuclear capabilities, should reduce their arsenals, with a view to their total elimination. States producing nuclear-weapon components should convert their production. Nuclear-weapon-free States should monitor the compliance of all countries with international treaties.

As Deputy Secretary-General Fréchette stated in a speech in Vienna at the Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), we are

> "at a dangerous crossroads between progressive disarmament and a revival of the arms race".

I would add that it is up to us, and only us, to make history turn the right way.

San Marino is among the countries that have signed the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, and we intend to ratify it as soon as our national procedures are completed. We regret that so far we have only 21 of the 44 ratifications needed for the CTBT to enter into force. We share the concern of the Canadian Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Axworthy, who stated in a recent article:

> "the ratification and full compliance of the CTBT will be harder than expected and it will take more than a yearly Conference".

He proposes, first, to establish a group to meet between article XIV conferences to facilitate the exchange of information between members, stimulate discussion, and provide for coordination; and, secondly, to extend the office of the Chair of the CTBT article XIV conference to the following conference in order to ensure contact and coordination. We think that these proposals could represent effective ways to help the process. San Marino also hopes that all countries, especially those with nuclear capabilities, will soon sign and ratify the CTBT and the NPT, despite recent developments which do not seem to confirm this expectation.

At a meeting with the Secretary-General on 23 September 1999 in New York, the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the five permanent members of the Security Council called upon all States which have not yet done so to accede to the Non-Proliferation Treaty. We are comforted by their commitment under article VI and by their willingness to contribute to the successful outcome of the 2000 Treaty Review Conference.

Since becoming a fully fledged Member of the United Nations we have always voted in favour of draft resolutions establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones or countries on the basis of agreements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned, such as the Treaties of Tlatelolco, Rarotonga, Pelindaba and Bangkok and the Antarctic Treaty, or the declaration of the single nuclear-weapon-free State of Mongolia. For this reason, we will support again this year any draft resolution with that aim. The declaration of a nuclear-weapon-free zone or country is, in our opinion, a sign of extreme good faith — faith in a nuclear-weapon-free future and the neighbours of that zone or country. Nuclear-weapon-free zones or countries are the healthiest parts of our planet. That should be the meter by which we measure the power of a nation.

Connected to the issue of nuclear-weapon-free zones or countries is that of the dumping of radioactive wastes.

My country is still very concerned about environmental norms in the drafting and application of disarmament agreements. Resolution 53/77 C was adopted without a vote last year, an indication that all countries recognize its importance and urgency. That problem, however, still exists. We believe that Governments should introduce or extend programmes for monitoring and cleaning up the areas affected by radioactive or chemical wastes and for the rehabilitation of former military test sites.

San Marino is traditionally and proudly bound to the resolution entitled "Follow-up to the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the *Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons*", and we will also support this year's draft resolution, in the hope that those countries that voted against or abstained last year will finally join the wide majority and recognize the usefulness of such a deliberation.

"Disarmament" is not only a noun; it is a verb. This means that we should put it into action, and not let it merely sit on the pages of our statements, our resolutions or our treaties that have not yet entered into force.

Mr. Enkhsaikhan (Mongolia): May I extend to you, Sir, my delegation's congratulations on your well-deserved election and pledge my delegation's full support and cooperation. Our felicitations also go to the other members of the Bureau on their election.

This year the First Committee begins its deliberations in conditions of growing concern over the possibility of a renewed nuclear arms race, regionally or globally, and of the continued reliance on nuclear deterrence and doctrines as a basis of ensuring security at the national, regional and global levels.

Despite some positive developments, to which some previous speakers have made reference, the disarmament and international security agenda today is overshadowed by disturbing developments: delay and additional strain in the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT); measures to develop ballistic missile defence that could undermine the strategic balance and stability as well as the nuclear arms reduction process in general; growth in the number of States that are developing or testing missiles; delay in ratification of the START II Treaty and thus delay in proceeding to the START III negotiations; continued failure of the Conference on Disarmament to engage in substantial negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty; and the absence of agreement on the convening of the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD-IV).

In the face of such negative developments, in our view the international community should redouble its efforts aimed at realistically addressing these problems and challenges and perhaps outline the measures that could be taken to reverse these negative trends. In order to do that, perhaps we ought to ask ourselves where we have gone wrong; whether we are making the most of the existing negotiating mechanisms and specific arms reduction and disarmament regimes; whether our efforts and good faith in negotiations are equally matched with good faith in follow-ups; whether the States that under the United Nations Charter have primary responsibility in the area of the maintenance of international peace and security are living up to the Charter or to our expectations; and so on. Answers to these and related questions would be quite useful in addressing those and other challenges.

Mongolia is strongly committed to disarmament, non-proliferation and strengthening international peace and security. My Prime Minister, in his address in the General Assembly general debate at the current session, spoke extensively on Mongolia's position on, and policy with regard to, the pressing international security and disarmament issues. Furthermore, our national position on these issues is in part reflected in the ministerial communiqué of the Non-Aligned Movement adopted on 23 September here in New York. Therefore, today I should like to address only the following five issues.

I begin with the Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems, the ABM Treaty. After the end of the cold war the international community agreed that further efforts towards nuclear disarmament, as set out in the decision on principles and objectives adopted by the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), are essential if we are to reduce and eliminate nuclear weapons. It is in this context that we approach the question of the ABM Treaty. When it was signed by the then Soviet Union and the United States, Mongolia, like other countries, welcomed it as an important step towards strengthening the strategic balance and international security and as a step conducive to nuclear arms reduction. Reality has confirmed that the international community was correct.

Mongolia still believes that the ABM Treaty, though a bilateral treaty, has far-reaching global strategic implications. As the Ministers of the Non-Aligned Movement specifically underlined in their communiqué,

> "we are ... concerned over the negative implications of the development and deployment of anti-ballistic missile defence systems and the pursuit of advanced military technologies capable of deployment in outer space which have, *inter alia*, contributed to the further erosion of an international climate conducive to the promotion of disarmament and the strengthening of international security."

In this connection, the Ministers called upon the States parties to the ABM Treaty to comply fully with its provisions. Mongolia fully subscribes to this call.

Secondly, I turn to the CTBT. Three years have passed since it was adopted and opened for signature. As of today 155 countries have signed it, and 51 have already ratified it. Among the latter there are 26 whose ratification is essential for the Treaty's entry into force, including two of the five nuclear-weapon States, the United Kingdom and France. This fact alone demonstrates that there is wide support for the Treaty. When it was adopted in 1996 expectations were high about its role. The three years that have elapsed have only underlined the importance of the Treaty for the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, for giving a much-needed impetus to the process of nuclear disarmament and, in general, for strengthening international peace and security. Mongolia was among the first to sign and then ratify the Treaty. It is also providing three monitoring stations for the international monitoring system to be set up under the Treaty. Bearing in mind Mongolia's strategic location, the three monitoring stations are recognized as highly valuable.

My delegation believes that the CTBT can and should play an exceptionally important role in nuclear non-proliferation. Its provisions, including the setting up of 321 monitoring stations, are invaluable in strengthening non-proliferation and confidence. Further delay of the Treaty's entry into force would only increase the risk of nuclear testing and thus horizontal or vertical proliferation of nuclear weapons. It is expected that all the signatories will work for the speediest ratification, and that pending ratification the signatories will respect the letter and the spirit of the Treaty.

Last Friday in Vienna the Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty issued a declaration renewing the determination of its participants to work for universal ratification of the Treaty and its early entry into force. Mongolia, which participated in the Conference, believes that the declaration should be followed up with concrete practical measures. It is to be hoped that during this session the Committee will be able to exchange views on this question and on how the international community could further the Treaty's early entry into force. That should be one of our primary tasks. Mongolia believes that delay in the entry into force of the CTBT, and especially the attitude of the nuclear-weapon States, will affect the 2000 NPT Review Conference and its outcome.

Thirdly, I come to the question of nuclear-weapon-free zones. From Mongolia's perspective, the consolidation of existing zones and the establishment of new ones in various parts of the world would contribute to the strengthening of the international non-proliferation regime, regional stability and security. In this context, Mongolia welcomes the adoption by the Disarmament Commission at its last session of the principles and guidelines for establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones. We believe that these principles and guidelines will be useful in establishing new zones in the future. In this connection, Mongolia hopes that the ongoing negotiations among the Central Asian States and with the other States concerned will lead to the early conclusion of a treaty establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in this important region.

Within the context of nuclear-weapon-free zones, I should like to refer to last year's resolution 53/77 D, entitled "Mongolia's international security and nuclear-weapon-free status". That resolution has received widespread international support. I should like to take this opportunity to thank once again those States that have expressed their support for Mongolia's policy and its status, including the delegations of Ecuador and San Marino. Also in this connection, my delegation would like to thank the Russian Federation for expressing its readiness to consider together with other countries the issue of providing corresponding security assurances to Mongolia.

As a follow-up to the resolution, Mongolia, in close cooperation with the States concerned, is actively working to implement it. Two rounds of expert-level consultations have been held on ways and means of implementation, including defining the status in conjunction with Mongolia's international security needs and interests.

The Mongolian Government is presently working on draft national legislation on Mongolia's nuclear-weapon-free status, with a view to submitting it for consideration and adoption by the Parliament in the near future. The law would draw on existing and evolving international practice in the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones and would reflect Mongolia's unique geographical location. At

the beginning of this session the Mongolian Government issued a memorandum (A/54/323) on this question.

Fourthly, I wish to refer to conventional disarmament. In turning to the question of small arms, my delegation can be quite brief. It supports the convening of an international conference on the illicit arms trade in all its aspects in the year 2001.

Fifthly, I come to the issue of regional cooperation. Mongolia attaches great importance to regional efforts aimed at disarmament and strengthening regional security. We believe that such cooperation could play an important role in promoting confidence and regional disarmament. Last August the Government of Mongolia, together with the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific, organized in Ulaanbaatar a regional meeting on security concepts in the changing world. Participants from more than 20 countries of the region focused on such issues as the definition of security in the changing world, security concepts, military and nuclear doctrines, the security of small States, information technology and national defence, and nuclear-weapon-free zones. The question of defining Mongolia's nuclear-weapon-free status was also extensively discussed. The participants all agreed that the conference was very interesting and useful.

The past decade has demonstrated that the regional centre is playing an important role in promoting dialogue on disarmament and security-related issues. My delegation, which tries to take an active part in the work of the regional centre, believes that its activities should be supported both politically and financially. Therefore, we believe that the question of establishing a permanent office in Kathmandu should be expedited and that meanwhile the Centre should continue to operate from New York.

In conclusion, allow me, Sir, to reiterate that the First Committee this year has a special role to play in breaking the current negative trends that I outlined at the beginning of my statement. That could be our contribution to marking the dawn of the new century.

Mr. Naidu (Fiji): My delegation wishes to join other delegations in warmly congratulating you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee. We would like to assure you and the Bureau of our full support and cooperation.

The *raison d'être* of the United Nations is the maintenance of international peace and security in our world, as highlighted in Chapter I, Article 1, of the Charter. My delegation considers disarmament and international security to be the foundations for permanent and lasting peace and security on our planet and the twin pillars of a culture of peace.

Disarmament programmes must include nuclear disarmament, the elimination of weapons of mass destruction, a ban on anti-personnel landmines and more effective oversight of the production, sale and distribution of conventional weapons, especially small arms. Concurrently we must take appropriate steps to institute regional security arrangements and to prevent, rather than just respond to, armed conflicts.

On the issues of disarmament, my delegation wishes to reiterate its support for the Conference on Disarmament, although, as a small country, we would have wished the venue for its meetings to be in New York so that we could have participated in them. Our view mirrors the views of the majority of small countries. The Conference has suffered recent setbacks in its disarmament efforts, but it remains a valid forum in which we can coherently address the issues of disarmament.

It is the view of my delegation that the more things have changed in nuclear disarmament the more they have remained the same. For example, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) has been with us now for many years, but it has not prevented nuclear proliferation, as evidenced by the development of nuclear weapons in a few more countries in recent times. And more and more, with contemporary advances in technology, modern and sophisticated innovations to nuclear weapons technology have been developed. For example, there was the announcement by one nuclear-weapon country of the development of miniature nuclear weapons. A few years ago we adopted the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), but it has not prevented nuclear testing of one kind or another.

The problems we face in bringing about nuclear disarmament are many, but we believe that the principal one is that while the entire world and the people of nuclear-weapon countries desire nuclear disarmament, the political will of the Governments of nuclear-weapon countries is not congruent with the will of the people. Another major reason is that the Governments of nuclear-weapon States consider nuclear weapons to be an effective deterrent in any military conflict and that possession accords to that State a superior military Power status. The reality, therefore, has been that while we have spent years in discussions on

nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear-test bans we have made very little progress in nuclear disarmament, the NPT and the CTBT notwithstanding.

If the international community is to make any significant progress towards nuclear disarmament, nuclear-weapons States must themselves demonstrate an obligation and commitment to the full implementation of the provisions of the NPT. The NPT review process must therefore be qualitatively different and much more forward-looking. The CTBT has been signed by the vast majority of the Member States of the United Nations, but, alas, only a small number of countries have ratified it. The net effect is that the Treaty has not entered into force. My delegation accordingly urges all States that have signed the Treaty to proceed to ratify it as quickly as possible.

My delegation considers the START process to be a relevant and valuable instrument to reduce and eventually eliminate nuclear weapons. We urge that the process be energized and expanded to include all nuclear-weapon States.

The creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones in several parts of the world has been a relatively new and welcome development in our struggle for nuclear disarmament. We call upon regional States to support initiatives for the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones where they do not already exist. Our ultimate goal for nuclear disarmament must be the total elimination of all nuclear weapons from our planet and the negotiation and conclusion of a treaty for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free world.

Fissile material is a principal element in the manufacture and production of nuclear weapons. Nuclear disarmament objectives must therefore include the banning of fissile material. My delegation submits that a ban on the production, sale or transfer of fissile material should proceed with the greatest urgency. In the meantime, we should make every effort to establish a fissile material inventory and negotiate a fissile material cut-off treaty.

The Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) has come into force, but in the view of my delegation it lacks the universality it needs in order to be an effective instrument. My delegation calls on all States to become parties to the Convention, especially those States that have the capacity to produce such weapons. We also call for the full implementation of the provisions of the Convention.

The Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction (BWC) in our view also lacks universality. We continue to call on States that have not already done so to become parties to the Convention. We also call for the early conclusion of the verification protocol and for the full commitment and substantial participation of all States parties to ensure the Convention's full and effective implementation.

My delegation believes that anti-personnel landmines should be totally eliminated from the arsenals of the countries of the world. Anti-personnel landmines continue annually to inflict death and serious bodily injury on thousands of civilians, including women and children. We urge a ban on the use, production, sale and transfer of such mines. We call on all States, in the interests of humanity, to sign the anti-personnel landmines Convention, and we urge all States that have already signed it to proceed to ratify it. In the meantime, we should make every effort, with the necessary resources, to locate and eliminate the millions of mines that have been planted in various countries of the world, and to expand international programmes to care for and rehabilitate landmine victims.

Conventional weapons, especially small arms and light weapons, have featured ignominiously in recent intra-State conflicts. Proliferation in the production, sale and transfer of conventional weapons has exacerbated genocide and ethnic cleansing in some intra-State conflicts. Urgent attention must therefore be accorded to the preparation and promulgation of the strategies to limit the proliferation in the sale and transfer of such weapons, and particularly to stem the flow to adversaries in situations of armed conflict.

The meeting rose at 12.10 p.m.